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Fall Edition

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES *Newsletter*

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS - ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

ES Plays Major Role Presenting City as Clean and Beautiful

While it's commonly known that ES - Sanitation is responsible for collecting garbage and recycling carts and excess debris left at the curbs or alleys, did you know that we also play a major role in the City's many parades, festivals and fireworks events that occur over the summer months?

This year, the Great Circus Parade returned with great fanfare and included several Environmental Services employees who served as the official white wingers and roadway restorers in and following the parade. Here's to all the dedicated and hard working employees who help to keep Milwaukee clean and green.

Wanda Booker



Milwaukee Is America In Bloom Champion

At the 8th Annual America in Bloom Symposium and Awards held October 3rd, Milwaukee was awarded the America in Bloom Champion award for winning the population category of 100,001 and above. In the friendly competition, communities are matched by population and evaluated on their efforts related to floral displays, urban forestry, landscaped areas, turf and groundcover, tidiness, environmental awareness, heritage conservation, and community involvement. The awards honor and recognize the contributions made everyday by our staff, our corporations, community organizations and residents.



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CRANK IT ANOTHER NOTCH

The September 24, 2009 edition of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel featured the article "City Budget is Grim All Over". In this article, Mayor Barrett states, "Overall, it's a grim budget for taxpayers, city workers and those who use city services." The Mayor's 2010 proposed budget plan shows a freeze of wages of all city employees and four unpaid furlough days for every city worker including police officers but not firefighters. We asked City of Milwaukee employees for their feelings on the subject of mandatory furlough days.

The first question deals with how they feel the City of Milwaukee's services were affected. As expected, the answers were somewhat myopic, concerning their area of responsibility within the City system.

How have City services been affected by the mandatory furlough days?

On pilot setout garbage routes there is no effect. However, when Special Service crews are lost for the day it causes a back log for brush pickup and the recycle collection falls behind and suffers.

*Department of Public Works
– Environmental Services*



It causes me to work harder, you know, to make up for the time that was lost. The workload wasn't reduced. The job still has to be done.

Department of Administration – Procurement

I don't think it affected anything. I think it was a political move because people are suffering everywhere and if we don't suffer somewhat, it reflects badly on the City.

Department of Public Works – Fleet Services

I don't see any savings. Just the opposite. We have to do overtime to catch up.

Department of City Development - Housing Authority

We work within the constraints set before us and we've made it work. We have to continually adjust. I don't think services have suffered, due to our flexibility and schedule and staff shuffling.

Department of Public Works – Environmental Services

Morale is the major factor! People are choosing the pay option for the Sick Leave Incentive program rather than the day off from work and I've noticed people are not giving to the United Way for this year's Combined Giving campaign. Many employees are concerned that all city employees are not being treated equally, if one department is being furloughed, every department should be furloughed.

Department of Public Works – Environmental Services

Continued on page 3



Furloughs - continued from page 2

Trying to support garbage pickup on furlough days really doesn't make sense. We had one guy covering the whole city. He is working on a truck near the airport and the next call is at Industrial Road. The truck at North 1 is going to be sitting for a while. What's the good in that?

Department of Public Works – Fleet Services

The second question probed the impact of the furlough policy on the individual and their household. The main topic cited was the loss of income but some welcomed the extra days off.

How has your personal life been affected by furlough days?

Financially, I've had to eliminate a life insurance policy that I've had for years. I can't afford the life insurance due to additional furlough days and rising solid and waste fees. It has affected my life in several ways.

Department of Public Works – Environmental Services



I don't live paycheck to paycheck. I'm a senior employee and if it's this (furloughs) or layoffs, I don't want to see the young guys just starting their families lose their jobs. I don't want to see anybody lose their job.

Department of Public Works – Fleet Services

This last furlough was harder than the first because the mortgage and the car are at the beginning of the month. Losing a day caused a cash flow problem for the household but we'll make it.

Department of Public Works – Environmental Services

If it were twelve, fourteen days, I don't think I could afford that. Four days, that works. I think of it as another day off, I mean, I don't sit around saying "f***ing City" and feel sorry for myself. I'm off and doing things. I don't think about it until the paycheck comes.

Department of Public Works – Environmental Services

It has made me more aware of the money I'm spending. As matter of fact, I try not to spend money on the furlough days because, you know, I'm not making any.

Department of Public Works – Fleet Services

Now this was neither a scientific study nor a valid survey. It was just conversation between people sharing common experiences. We would like to hear from you. If you would like to respond to the questions, send us an email to ESfeedback@milwaukee.gov. Privacy will be maintained for all respondents. We will publish some more responses in the Winter Edition. (**NOTE:** The responses in the article are not verbatim. They are paraphrased and condensed to reflect the gist of the individual's total conversation.)

Shannon Davis & Ron Melanz

PELLET STOVES:

AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE HEAT SOURCE FOR YOU?

What is a pellet stove? A pellet stove is an electrical device that feeds wood pellets from a hopper into a burn chamber. Many look like woodstoves, and come in a wide variety of models ranging from ornate to functional. Pellet stoves require electricity to run, as they have an auger which delivers a measured amount of pellets to the burn chamber, as well as blowers to circulate heat and exhaust fumes. Models vary greatly, but some can heat 2000 square ft. of space. Depending on your situation, a pellet stove can supplement your furnace or actually become a primary heating source.

What are the pellets made of? Most pellets are made from excess sawdust produced by the lumber industry. Some may include other sources of bio-waste. The pellets look just like the pellets found at petting zoos used to feed animals. In fact the pellets are made by the same machinery which binds the material together under intense pressure. The good news is that the fuel is made from sustainable sources and would generally be considered a waste by-product. Pellet plants are located across the country, so pellet production benefit's the local economy. Pellets come packaged in 40lb. Bags. Prices vary based on factors such as demand, availability, and general product makeup.

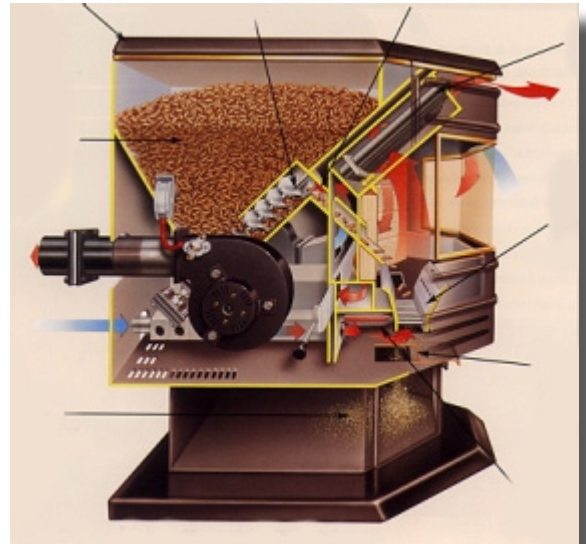
Don't pellet stoves pollute the environment? As with any combustion, gases are released in the process. However, unlike old-fashioned woodstoves, pellet stoves are considered to burn quite clean. The EPA does not regulate pellet stoves based on emissions. Some sources claim that pellet stoves burn 15 times cleaner than EPA particulate standards dictate. A ton of wood pellets can be reduced to less than 5 gallons of ash by a properly operated pellet stove. This translates into a major reduction at landfills and their associated greenhouse gases. Since pellets are plant material, their production aids in oxygen production and carbon sequestration while the plant is growing.

Do pellet stoves exhaust into your chimney? No. In fact pellet stove exhaust cannot be mixed with exhaust from devices such as your furnace or hot water heater. The good news is exhaust is conducted through special pipes about the size of your dryer vent. This pipe makes it easier to exhaust pellet stove as it can be vented out the side of walls. Of course, it is best to consult with your supplier about what the safest and legal options are for venting.

Are pellet stoves hard to maintain? That depends on your perception. There is maintenance involved. Simple tasks include filling the hopper with pellets, cleaning the glass (on decorative models), and regular removal of ash. More complex tasks include cleaning the exhaust pipes of ash, cleaning blower fins, and other manufacturer recommended maintenance. Most pellet stove suppliers will perform the more complex maintenance tasks for a fee. The more mechanically inclined may feel comfortable performing them on their own.

What are some other benefits of a pellet stove? Many owners like that they do not have the chore of cutting, seasoning, and storing wood, but can still enjoy the dry heat and ambiance of a fire. Pellet stoves are becoming widely accepted by insurance companies.

Where can I find more information? There are various sources ranging from pellet stove dealers, books, magazines, and the internet.



Scott Miller



It was a call from Mike Brady, a long time City of Milwaukee employee, that started the dirt flying. The Mayor and the Department of Public Works took the suggestion and soon there were vegetables growing on Market Street. They enlisted the services of Growing Power, an organization founded in 1995 by Will Allen, a local farmer whose efforts in urban farming gained him national fame as a MacArthur Fellow in 2008.

DPW turned to the in-house green thumbs, ES-Forestry and utilized the planters located outside the Zeidler Building. Project Manager Paula Oleszak, Forestry Supervisor, said the planters were chosen because they could be fitted with chicken wire to prevent rabbits and other creatures from feasting on the vegetables. To prepare the soil, compost and worms were acquired from Growing Power, along with seeds and plants for the garden. Even Alderman Nik Kovac got his hands dirty as he and his assistant Sarah Horn helped Forestry workers set seeds and plants in June.

Maintenance of the gardens during the crucial sprouting and adolescent growing stages was performed by members of the City's Earn To Learn program and Forestry personnel. In August, a press conference was held to highlight the urban agricultural demonstration garden project. Mayor Tom Barrett assisted the student interns in harvesting collards and lettuce prior to the event.

It is expected that the gardens will ultimately produce 250 to 300 pounds of vegetables this season, all of which will be donated to Second Harvest of Wisconsin.

Kudos to Letrica Morris, Urban Forestry Specialist, who supervised the Learn to Earn summer youth interns, Tranice Anderson, Valencia Howard, Milarix Malave, Tarreana Neal, Treland Rosser, Domiquero Sims and Devon Williams. Thanks also to Forestry personnel Brad Ames, Dan Johnson, Dave Awe, Bob Kessen, Jim Faupl and Bill Jankowski.



Mayor Tom Barrett , DPW 's Preston Cole, Alderman Nic Kovacs, Second Harvest of Wisconsin's Bonnie Bellehumeur & Growing Power's Will Allen at the August press conference.

Photo: Scott Baran



Growing Power's Will Allen looks on as Earn To Learn youth interns tend the gardens at the Zeidler Municipal Building.

Photo: Scott Baran



Over a half year after its launch, the Recycle For Good campaign continues to provide education on the benefits of recycling through public outreach including print and online ads, radio and TV commercials, recycling truck images, and a feature story as a part of WISN TV's Going Green series. Each month, an increasing number of visitors turn to the Milwaukee Recycles website (www.MilwaukeeRecycles.com) for recycling information. Recycling campaigns are currently underway in specific neighborhoods through partnerships with the Southside Organizing Committee and the Sherman Park Community Association.

When compared to the previous year, recycling throughout the City's Special Emphasis Area, an area of lower recycling participation, increased by 11.2% during the first seven months of the campaign.

Becky Curtis

TUCKING YOUR YARD IN FOR THE WINTER

As winter approaches, take the time to prepare your yard for the season. All yards and landscapes differ, but here are some basic tips that can be applied. If you apply chemicals to your lawn, the last fertilization, which prepares the turf for spring, should be applied as late as possible, even if a light snow has fallen that will melt before winter. However, if you are applying a weed and feed, this should be done by middle to late September, while turf weeds are still growing. The last cutting of the lawn can be cut shorter than usual. This will help retain a cleaner look longer into the winter. Remember that a lawn should normally be cut to 2 ½", and not shorter. This helps retain moisture and does not stress the turf. Frequent cuttings reduce the need to bag grass clippings, and it will leave them to replenish nutrients back into the soil, reducing the amount of fertilizer needed.

If a threat of frost is coming, cover any plants you want to keep living. Tomatoes, Summer squash, begonias, coleus and impatiens are particularly affected by a light frost. Make sure to uncover them before the sun gets hot during the day so you don't bake the plants. Even after the ground freezes, carrots and brussel sprouts will sweeten up. They can be harvested into winter. After a hard frost, perennials can be cut down. Iris and peonies, in particular, can harbor diseases and pest over winter, allowing them to spread in spring. Grasses, coneflowers and rudbeckias can be left for winter interest. The seeds also provide food for birds. Shrubs can also be left standing. Do not prune any spring blooming shrubs, as you will cut off the flower buds for spring, decreasing flowering.

Tammy Schneider



As promised in the Summer issue of the ES Newsletter, we will reveal the identity of the unknown photographer. It's Larry Hucks, Urban Forestry Specialist at North District. His interest in photography peaked at a very young age, wishing to capture the essence of the outdoors in images. Photography grew from being just his hobby to becoming the CEO and sole proprietor of Snapshot Photography, LLC. Larry has taken classes at MATC in Photography, where he was certified. His business has been in operation since 2004, where he has photographed weddings, group shots, family pictures and church functions. There is no scenery too great for Larry. He takes nothing for granted because a photo can convey emotions that people sometimes are unable to speak. He is the consummate professional and he enjoys the art of taking photos, giving you a moment to remember.

Tammy Schneider



Emerald Ash Borer - UPDATE

The injections of all City of Milwaukee Ash Trees kicked off in Mid-May. The City had several training sessions to familiarize the staff with equipment and protocols. With all new endeavors problems will arise. Crews struggled with our injection guns right out of the gate. The guns had to be modified (elimination of the dose sizer) to dispense the proper dosage into the tree. This relieved a moving part that could become gummed up with chemical and cause down time for field crews. Also, crews had issues with batteries running out of power too quickly for the cordless drills. Extra batteries were purchased and a rotating charging system was installed to keep crews in the field.

At the height of ash injection, Forestry had nine 2-person crews in the field evaluating and injecting ash trees greater than 8" in diameter at breast height. Crews started injections on the far north side of the City with a goal of reaching North Ave. by the end the injection season. The north side was chosen as the starting point due to its proximity to the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) found in Ozaukee County. North Avenue was selected because it is approximately the mid point of the City's quarter sections. This goal was reached by Mid-September with 13,200 trees injected.

Next year crews will begin injections in May and start on the south side and work north due to EAB being found in the City of Franklin. EAB is on the doorstep so be vigilant in your inspections of ash trees. Also, make sure to thank EAB crew members for their incredible job handling a new procedure and aiding in troubleshooting problems to keep crews in the field.

Jeff Kluslow



DON'T DESTROY the things You Love



Thousands of
Oaks
killed by Oak Wilt



20 million Ash
killed by
Emerald Ash Borer



100 million Elm
killed by
Dutch Elm Disease

**Moving Firewood can spread
insects and diseases that
KILL TREES.**

Please...

**buy firewood
where you camp.**



Got a question, comment, or suggestion? Let us know about it.
Email us at ESfeedback@milwaukee.gov

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